

Reading Projects & Activities

by Jo Higgins

Assessment of student reading has been evolving ever since students have been reading and teachers have been evaluating. Long gone is the book report of yesteryear. In its place are alternative book reports, group projects, and various other activities. Contained in the following pages is an assorted selection of both individual and group activities which can be used to assess and extend student reading comprehension.

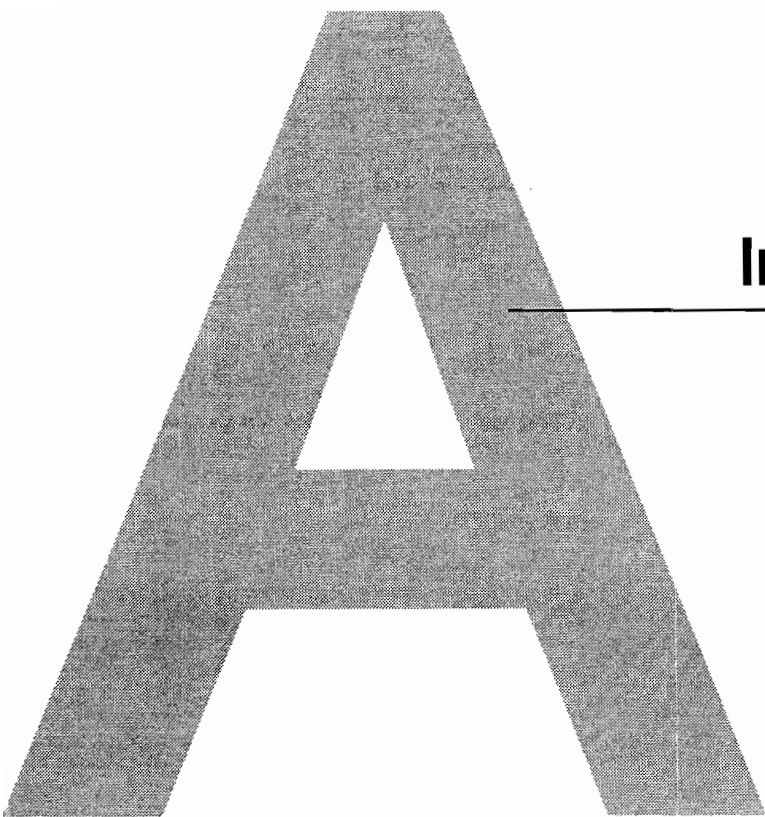
The goal of all projects, whether individual or group, is threefold – The student must prove that he/she has read the book in its entirety, demonstrate that he/she has reflected and thought deeply about it, and produce a quality product.

The first section of this text contains individual projects which are divided into possible “A,” “B,” and “C” projects. This is to allow students to choose what grade they would like to work towards. In addition, teachers sometimes find it difficult to grade one project against another because some projects obviously take more work than others. Or there may be varying degrees of difficulty within the same type of project depending on the individual student or situation.

The breakdown of grades for individual projects as shown here is by no means definitive, but rather is offered as a suggested guideline. Many of the projects can be altered to achieve a different grade. Many of the “C” projects could become “A” projects by improving the quality or sometimes the quantity. For example, if a large number of haikus or limericks were written, neatly typed, illustrated, and placed in a booklet form that would certainly merit a higher grade than a “C.” Likewise, an “A” project lack in quality and thus receive a lower grade. Often, written presentations can be enhanced by adding acting or videotaping. Also, computers, particularly desktop publishing and graphics, can enhance many projects even to the point where they look professional.

The second section contains introductory activities, concurrent activities, and final projects specifically for groups of students. These ideas can be used whether students in a class all read the same novel or groups (or individuals within groups) read different novels.

Individual “A” Projects



1. **Advertising Campaign** - Design an advertising campaign to promote the sale of the book you read. Include each of the following in your campaign a poster, a radio or TV commercial, a magazine or newspaper ad, a bumper sticker and a button. (Carter and Rashkis)
2. **Board Game** - Create a board game based on events and characters in the book you read. By playing your game members of the class should learn what happened in the book. Your game must include the following: a game board, a rule sheet and clear directions, events and characters from the story on cards or on a game board. (Carter and Rashkis)
3. **Models** - Make models of three objects which were important in the book read. On a card attached to each model tell why the object was important in the book. (Carter and Rashkis)
4. **Story Map** - If the book you read involves a number of locations within a country or geographical area, plot the events of the story on a map. Make sure the map is large enough for us to read the main events clearly. Attach a legend to your map. Write a paragraph that explains the importance of each event indicated on your map. (Carter and Rashkis)
5. **Drawings** - Complete a series of five drawings that show five of the major events in the plot of the book you read. Write captions for each drawing so that the illustrations can be understood by someone who did not read the book. (Carter and Rashkis)
6. **Character Party** - Plan a party for the characters in the book you read. In order to do this, complete each of the following tasks: a) Design an invitation to the party which would appeal to all of the characters. b) Imagine that you are five of the characters in the book and tell what each would wear to the party. c) Tell what food you will serve and why. d) Tell what games or entertainment you will provide and why your choices are appropriate. e) Tell how three of the characters will act at the party. (Carter and Rashkis)
7. **On Trial** - Adapt the prosecuting attorney activity outlined above to a dual-role project: In one role, present the prosecuting case, and in the other present the case for the defense. If a classmate has read the same book, you might make this a two-person project. (Carter and Rashkis)
8. **Diorama** - Make a shoebox diorama of a scene from the book you read. Write a detailed explanation of the scene and attach it to the diorama.
9. **Monologue** - Pretend that you are one of the characters in the book you read. You can tape a monologue (one person talking) of that character telling of his or her experiences or perform it live. Be sure to write out a script ahead of time and turn it in. Practice using emotion and voice other voice inflections.
10. **TV Show** - Make a television box show of ten scenes in the order that they occur in the book you read. Cut a square from the bottom of a box to serve as a TV screen and make two slits in opposite sides of the box. Slide a butcher paper roll on which you have drawn the scenes through the two side slits. Make a tape to go with your television show. Write out a script before taping and turn it in along with the project.
11. **Filmstrip** - Make a filmstrip picturing what happened in the book you read. You can make a filmstrip by using Thermofax transparency material, but be sure it is narrow enough to fit through the projector. You will have to work carefully on a script before making your tape. (Carter and Rashkis)
12. **Slide Show** - Create a slide show depicting the major events in the novel you read. Record background explanations or music on tape to play along with the show. Or create a slide show that reflects a major theme of the novel you read. Find a piece of music that goes along with the theme and play it while showing the slides. Be sure to shoot more pictures than you will need and practice the show along with the background tape ahead of time.
13. **Interview** - Tape an interview with one of the characters in the book you read. Pretend that this character is being interviewed by a magazine or newspaper reporter. Use a

written script to guide you. Then write the article which resulted from the interview. You may do this project with a partner, but be sure to get permission from the teacher first.

14. **Guided Tour** - Imagine that you have been given the task of conducting a tour of the town in which the book you read is set. Make a tape describing the homes of the characters and the places where important events in the book took place. This would be especially effective if done on videotape. You might also want to use music or sound effects for a background for your tape.
15. **Designer Clothes** - Make a paper doll likeness of one of the characters in the book you read. Design at least three costumes for this character. Next, write a paragraph commenting on each outfit; tell what the clothing reflects about the character, the historical period, and events in the book. (Carter and Rashkis)
16. **Public Speaking** - Pick a national issue. Compose and deliver a speech to be given on that topic by one of the major characters in the book you read. Be sure the contents of the speech reflect the character's personality and beliefs. You will be expected to use notes and practice ahead of time.
17. **Advertising Campaign** - Design an advertising campaign to lure people to the part of the country the story takes place in. Find out about wildlife, food, scenic places, historic places, and other attractions. Create signs, posters, songs, and brochures that would entice others to visit. (Mitchell)
18. **Words of Wisdom** - Select one of the wisest characters in the book, look for what that character said that seemed sound, and then compile these quotations into a booklet entitled "The Wisdom of _____." Be sure to be neat and include visual accompaniments.
19. **Character Interviews** - Become a character (dress up and act like him/her) and let the other students interview you. If others in class have not read the book, you will need to write questions on index cards or slips of paper to distribute for class members to ask. Be sure that the personality of the character as well as major events and/or themes are revealed.
20. **Newspaper** - Create a newspaper that includes events and characters in the story. You can write news stories based on happenings in the story, interviews of the characters, classified ads, comics, editorials on issues in the book, etc. Authenticity and neatness count!
21. **Create an Ad** - This is an example of one I developed for *Great Expectations*.

"Miss Havisham needs help! Her clothes are yellow, her stockings are tattered and ragged, her face is wrinkled, her body is withered and sagging, she is tired and worn out, she has no color in her face and skin, and she has a broken heart. In addition, the rooms in her house are smelly, dust and mold is everywhere, cobwebs fill the corners, spiders and mice abound, and all her furniture is on the verge of falling apart." (Mitchell)

Create a product that could help Miss Havisham, her clothes, or her house. 1) Make up a name for your product. 2) List all the things it can do. 3) List all the reasons someone should buy it (everybody's doing it, a famous person used this product, you deserve the best, be the first to use this, people will like you if you do, etc.) 4) Write a slogan for your product. 5) Write up an advertisement for a newspaper for your product – draw a picture or cut a picture out of a magazine illustrating your product as part of the ad. 6) Write an ad that could be used on the radio, trying to incorporate sound effects or a song if possible. 7) If possible, create the actual product or package that the product would come in.

22. **Children's Books (same theme)** - After discussing the major themes in a novel, go to the school or public library to find picture books on the same themes. How is the theme treated in the children's book? Write up a critique of the children's book explaining how you felt the theme was reflected and dealt with. Then present your findings to the class, using the children's books as visual aids.
23. **Stage** - Design a miniature stage setting for a portion of the story. Include a written explanation as to the significance of the scene.
24. **Persuasive Speech** - Give a speech to the class persuade them why they should (or should not) read the book without giving the ending of the book away. Be sure to use notes and practice.
25. **Sketch a Sequence** - Sketch action sequences from the book. If you don't draw, you might consider staging the sequences and photographing them instead.
26. **Cartoon** - Create a cartoon strip or a series of cartoons using the characters or scenes from the book. Or sequence the main points of the book with cartoons.
27. **Author** - Become the author and tell why you wrote this story. In order to do this effectively you will need to research the author, write a script, and practice.
28. **Bulletin Board** - Make a bulletin board about the book, showing the main characters, the setting, etc. Be sure to ask the teacher for permission first and use lots of eye-catching visuals.
29. **Television Report** - You are a television news reporter. Videotape and present an on-the-scene news report based on an incident from the book.
30. **Songwriting** - Write a song with lyrics that represent the book, its characters, or the setting. Perform the song either live or on tape.
31. **Mural** - Create a mural to illustrate your book. Use charcoal, crayons, cut paper, watercolors, or other art forms.
32. **Puppetry** - Make a puppet or puppets of the characters. Write a play using the puppet(s) and perform it for the class.
33. **Chalk** - Give a chalk talk summary. Be sure to practice

before attempting it in front of an audience.

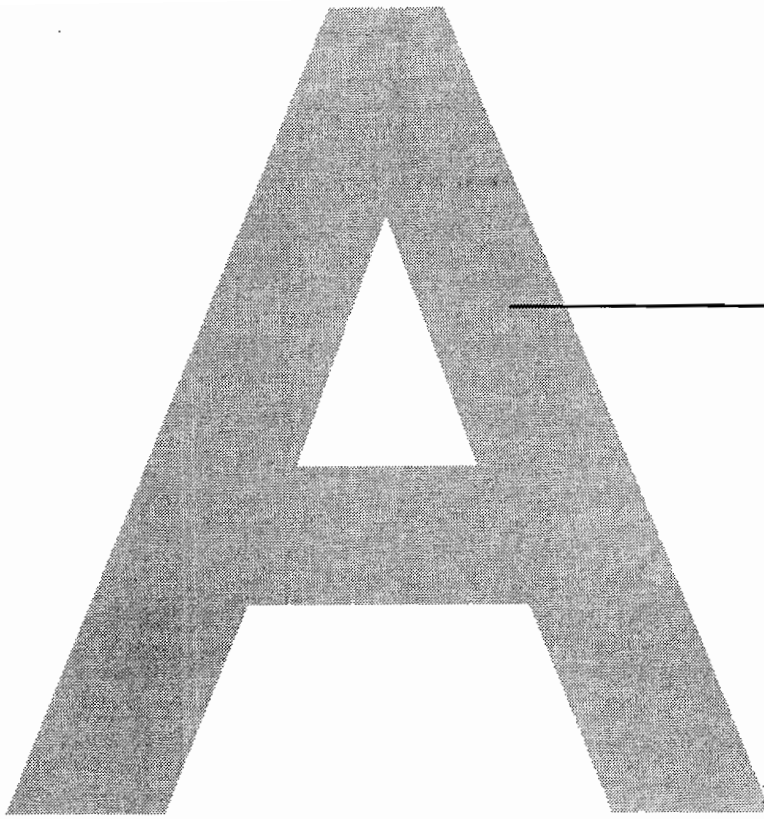
34. **Yearbook Snapshots** - Illustrate your in-depth understanding of four characters in this novel by imagining what they were like in high school. If they have shown little change in the course of the novel, chances are they haven't changed a great deal in their values and outlook since high school. Capture the essence of them, their values, beliefs, etc., by carefully selecting all the information that would go under their picture in a year book.

Include as much of the following information as possible:

(1) Nickname, (2) Activities, clubs, sports they were in and what years (1, 2, 3, 4), (3) Class mock award such as "class clown," (4) Quotation that shows something about the person and what is important to them, (5) Favorites - colors, food, etc., (6) Book that has had the greatest impact on them, (7) Voted "most-likely-to ?" (8) Plans after high school.

Here is a partial list of activities, clubs, and sports you can consider: Junior achievement, drama, debate, newspaper, yearbook, Latin, German, French, Spanish, Future Teachers, pep club, cheerleader, student body officer, sergeant at arms, football, basketball, baseball, National Honor Society, book club, poetry club, marching band, orchestra, choir, chess club, art club, Quiz Bowl, etc.

Mount all four pictures on a clear sheet of paper. Write the appropriate information under each picture.
(Mitchell)

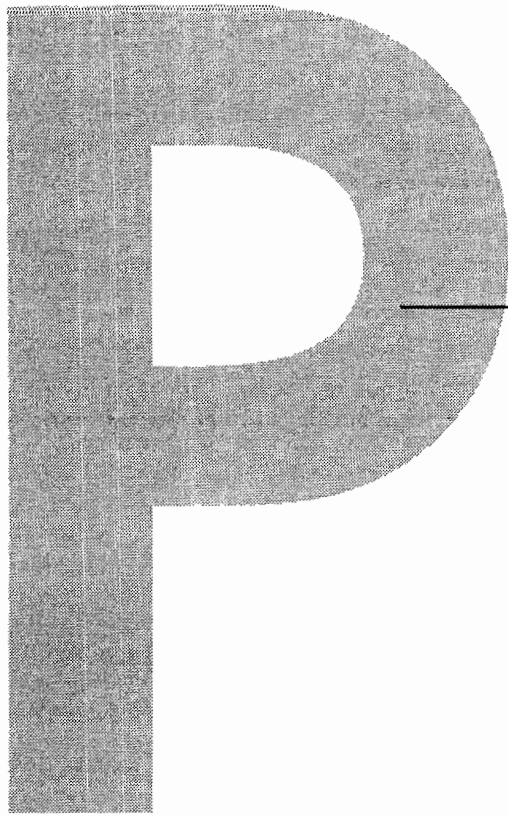


Group Activities

1. **Lists of Rules** - Have students select a character who has very definite ideas on a topic such as *friendship*, *raising children*, or *getting along in school*. Then have the students make up a set of "rules" about that topic as that character might state them. Do students share these values? Powerful whole class discussions can result.
2. **Divide the Text** - In groups, students divided the novel into three to five parts, explaining the rationale for their decisions. Where does the "beginning" come to a close? Where are the pauses? If this book were on television, where would the commercials fall? In this way, each character's relation to it, while another group might decide to show other characters' relationships. These diagrams can usefully be displayed on the bulletin board, with the complexity emerging as the book progresses.
3. **Change Actions** - Students choose a character in the book and look specifically at how he or she handled a specific situation. Then they discuss or write about how they would have like to see the matter handled.
4. **Character's Poetry** - From a collection of poetry, students pick out poems they believe specific characters would like. The poems are then read to the class for discussion.
5. **Similar Situations** - Students discuss a situation in the book that moved them or angered them and share situations or feelings they have experienced which were similar.
6. **Dramatize Issues** - Students list all the issues and problems they see being raised in the novel. Then they select several issues they see as critical and design role-playing situations about them, either using the characters from the novel or creating new characters and settings.
7. **Good Advice** - In groups students choose characters from the book and write all the advice they have to give to these characters.
8. **Study Dialect** - Discussion groups go through different chapters of the novel, gathering phrases and words that are used differently than they would use them. Students list the words and phrases and explain what they mean or tell how they would express the same idea.
9. **Book Titles** - Many book titles are not appealing to some students or don't give an accurate idea of what the book is about. Have students in groups create new titles and explain their choices.
11. **Examine Beliefs** - Students choose a specific belief a character holds throughout the novel and discuss whether group members agree with this belief. Again, lively whole group discussions can result as students report.
12. **Rewrite Scenes** - Students choose a scene that they feel didn't end up satisfactorily and rewrite it. Or they create a scene they would like to have included in the book.
13. **Advertising Posters** - If the novel lends itself to this, have students design posters advertising and promoting a specific event such as the Championship Coon Hunt in *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls.
14. **Response Logs** - Encourage students to react and think about the novel through response logs. Ask them to record what they think about, wonder about, react to, or don't understand as they read the book. Students can also be asked to respond from a specific character's point of view. Classes could be divided and each section assigned to respond from a different character's point of view. (Mitchell)
15. **Character's Poetry Choices** - From a collection of poetry, students pick out poems they believe specific characters would like. Students can also be asked to pick out poetry that reflects something about theme or setting. (Mitchell)
16. **Dialect Study** - Different groups go through different chapters of the novel gathering phrases and words that are used differently than they would use them. Students list the words and phrases and explain what they mean or tell how they would express the same idea. (Mitchell)
17. **"Good Ole Days"** - Many books are set in earlier time periods and show what life was like back then. Students can discuss and then list what seems to be similar or

different about these “good ole days.” (Mitchell)

18. **Scene Rewrites** - Choose a scene that didn't end up satisfactorily or a scene that never happened and write up a script to change the scene or to create a new one. (Mitchell)
19. **Phone-ins** - Simulate a phone-in on tape with calls either to characters in a book, asking about their motives, attitudes or actions, or to the author. (Mitchell)
20. **Movie Decisions** - Groups decide if the novel would make a good movie. Would it attract enough viewers to turn it into a movie? Is there enough action? How about the dialogue? Would there have to be a lot of changes? What parts might be taken out? What possible stars can the group suggest for the major roles? Make a report back to the class. (Mitchell)
21. **Chapter Titles** - Most novels do not have chapter titles. In groups, assign students to name each chapter. Put names on filecards. Then exchange cards with another group and see if they can sequence them correctly. (Mitchell)
22. **Quotations** - In groups, students pick out quotations which are characteristic of the characters in the book. The teacher assembles all the quotes and the next day passes them out to the groups to see which group can identify who said the quote first. If the novel is long, each group might be assigned only one character to find quotations for. (Mitchell)
23. **Words of Wisdom** - Each group takes one of the wisest characters in the book, looks for what that character said that seemed sound, and then compiles these quotations into a booklet entitled “The Wisdom of _____.” (Mitchell)
24. **Character Values** - Create a sheet of values that characters in the novel might hold such as trustworthy, honest, etc. Have students rank the values of the main characters. (Mitchell)
25. **Revealing Lines** - Have groups pick out lines that a character says that reveal the most about the character.
26. **Choices** - Pick out the choices the characters make that are most important. (Mitchell)
27. **Debates** - Choose an issue in a book that there are two sides to and debate it. (Mitchell)
28. **Pamphlet** - Write up a how-to pamphlet explaining the steps or ideas involved in doing something from the novel like how to hunt raccoons. (Mitchell)
29. **Divide the Text** - In groups, students divide the novel into three to five parts, explaining the rationale for their decisions. (Mitchell)
30. **Timeline of Events** - Pupils work up a linear representation of events in the book. If they have the time and talent they can also construct symbols to represent each event. (Mitchell)
31. **Diagrams** - Students diagram or web actions, events, or character relationships in the novel. One group might choose an event and show each character's relation to it while another group might choose a character and show other characters' relationship to him or her. (Mitchell)
32. **Change Actions** - Students choose a character in the book and look specifically at how he or she handled a specific situation. Then they discuss and write up how they would have liked to have seen it handled. (Mitchell)
33. **Identifying Issues** - Students list all the issues they can think of that are raised in the novel. Then they construct a situation that deals with the same issue to see how other students feel about the issue. (Mitchell)
34. **Lists** - Compose lists that have some relation to characters or issues in the book. In *The Pigman* John and Lorraine could compose a list of everything that's wrong with adults or parent. In *The Crucible* students could make up lists of everything that makes a person a witch. (Mitchell)
35. **Letter Exchange** - Assign half of the class the persona of one character and have them write to the other half of the class who have adopted a different persona. (Mitchell)
36. **Awards** - Have students create award categories for characters in the novel they have read. Then have them assign awards to the character they think most fits the category. For example, Most Caring Father might be awarded to Mr. Logan in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. (Mitchell)
37. **Pictures** - After reading a novel, have students bring in a picture that a specific character would like or appreciate or feel has a special meaning. Share these in groups with each student explaining what about the picture would appeal to the character. (Mitchell)
38. **Dramatization** - Dramatize an incident or an important character.
39. **Past to Present** - Bring a book character from past to present. Discuss or write how the character would act today.
40. **Questions** - In small groups, have students try to stump each other with difficult questions. Then have them write down the best ones to share with the whole class.
41. **Facts** - Students make lists of facts they learned from reading a nonfiction book.
42. **Charades** - Develop a game of charades based on the characters in the book.



Group Projects

variety of characters from the novel as well as people from today who would be experts on the issue. From *The Crucible* a group could discuss raising children. Modern guests might include Dr. C. Everett Koop, Mrs. Green from the TV show *Promised Land*, etc. (Mitchell)

1. **Board Game** - Have each group create a board game. The game could be based on events and characters from a common book each member has read or it could represent a common theme or common culture from several books. By playing the game, players should learn about what happened in the book or something about the theme or culture. The game must include a game board, a rule sheet and clear directions, events and characters from the novel(s) on cards or on a game board.
2. **Slide Show** - Create a slide show depicting the major events in the novel your group read. Scenes can be staged using a few props and some costumes. Record background explanations or music on tape to play along with the show. Or, create a slide show that reflects a major theme of a novel or novels read by the group. Find a piece of music that goes along with the theme and play it while showing the slides. Be sure to shoot more pictures than you will need and practice the show along with the background tape ahead of time.
3. **Eye Witness News Team** - This team consists of an anchorperson, sportscaster, weather broadcaster, writers and if possible a camera crew. Use events in the book for one of your broadcasts. If more than one group does this activity they can focus on different aspects of the text. (Mitchell)
4. **Advertising Campaign** - Students design an advertising campaign to lure people to the part of the country the story takes place in. Find out about wildlife, food, scenic places, historic places, and other attractions. Create signs, posters, songs, and brochures that would entice others to visit. (Mitchell)
5. **Talk Shows** - One student acts as host or hostess (Oprah or Phil) and discussed a specific issue from a novel with a
6. **Protest Campaign** - If students become upset about something that happens in a novel let them organize a protest campaign. In *Don't Care High* by Gordon Korman my students were upset that the principal would not let the student body have a president. In groups, they spent two days writing a speech to rally other students, composing a letter that would be read to the principal, and making posters and buttons in favor of the deposed president. On the third day each group delivered their speech to the rest of the class and tried to rally them to the cause, read their letters to the principal, and shared any other work they had done on the campaign. (Mitchell)
7. **Reader's Theater Scripts** - Assign each group a chapter and after explaining that they should include a narrator and only select important dialogue, narrative, and detail, have them write a script they can later perform for the class. (Mitchell)
8. **Newspaper** - After students have read a novel have them write and design a newspaper that includes events and characters in the story. They can write news stories based on happenings in the story, interviews of the characters, classified ads, comics, editorials on issues in the book, etc.
9. **Panel Discussion** - Each person is responsible for presenting the views of one person in the novel. If there are not enough main characters, one person can be the moderator and ask key questions. Questions should be made up ahead of time and should reveal the details of the book's main conflicts so the rest of the class can follow. Some questions can be given to members of the class ahead of time, and, if time permits, classmates can ask questions that are not preselected. Another alternative to this activity is to create a panel of experts (e.g., doctor, lawyer, clergy, etc.) to answer questions about the events of the novel from their perspective.
10. **Panel Discussion** - Organize a pro and con panel with a chairperson and debate an issue. Consider including one person as the author.
11. **Bulletin Board** - Make a bulletin board about the book, showing the main characters, the setting, etc.
12. **Puppetry** - Have students make puppets of the characters,

write a script and put on a puppet show for the class.

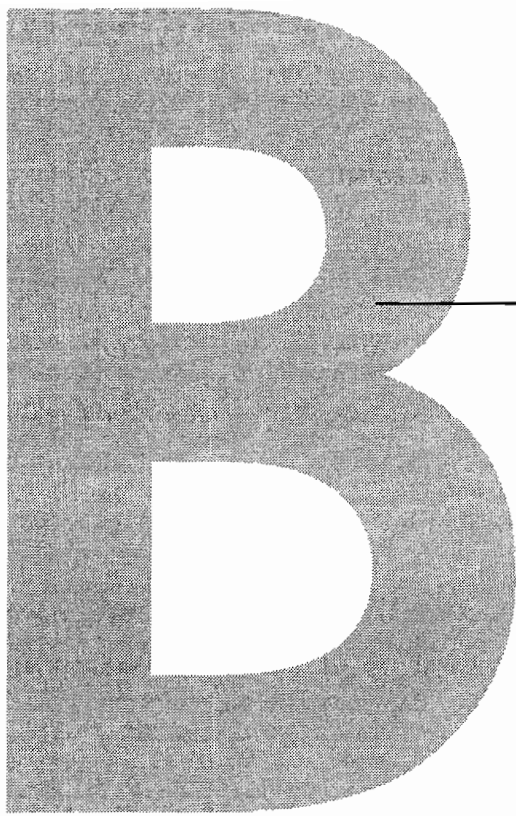
13. **Cooking** - Have students prepare and serve foods from a book they have each read. Or have them bring in foods from a particular area of the country or world that their novels represent.
14. **Group Debate** - Knowing that a debate is the intelligent, constructive exchange of ideas and opinions, have each person in your group choose a character in the story he or she wants to represent and set up a debate between characters. The debate may center around one particular conflict or an entire theme. If there are not enough characters in the story for each person to have a part, one person can act as the mediator. The debate should be written up and submitted at the time of the presentation.
15. **Group Role-Play** - Role-playing is the taking on of another's position and psychological perspective to gain greater insight into a person's psyche. Have each person in your group choose a character in a novel and play out a scene (or several scenes). Each person should try to assume the character's position and perspective as much as possible. A written script must accompany the presentation.
16. **Mock Trial** - Set up a mock trial to determine the guilt or innocence of a character in your novel. You can have one person be the judge, one the accused, one the prosecutor, one the defense attorney, and the class will be jurors. Be sure to have the attorneys ask questions that effectively reveal the crime so that the rest of the class will know what happened. Another alternative is to put the author of the book on trial. This is particularly effective if you feel the author was unjust or biased in his/her writing. A written script must be submitted at the time of the presentation.
17. **Rewrite as a Play** - Rewrite the novel as an abridged play. Be sure to include as many of the main events as possible. Your group can work on the script together, or you can divide the story up and have each person write a scene. If you divide it up, however, you will need to make your writing styles match. If you are having difficulty writing a scene, have some of your group mates act out the conflict to give you a better idea of how it actually happened.
18. **Time Period Presentation** - Authors are often strongly influenced by the times in which they lived. Present a skit that depicts the time period in which your story took place or the time period in which your author wrote/grew up. Be sure to study and include costumes, lingo, mannerisms, and so forth as much as possible. A written script must accompany the presentation.
19. **Chronological Scenes** - This project can only be done if the topic you are discussing has changed over a period of time. If it has, your group can write and act out a series of short scenes that depict the various stages in the development of your topic. For example, if your topic is the Civil Rights Movement, you could act out a scene from before the Civil War, just before the turn of the century, the Depression, the '60s, and the present. Each scene does not have to contain every group member, but be sure to

include all group members at least once. Or, one or two members can write the scripts and the rest act them out. Or, one or two people can narrate the scenes while two or three others act them out. A written script must accompany the presentation.

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Individual “B” Projects

1. **Scene Change** - Write a scene that could have happened in the book you read but didn't. Be sure to write using the same point of view as the author. After you have written the scene, explain how it would have changed the outcome of the book.
2. **Movie Poster** - Design a movie poster for the book you read. Cast the major characters in the book with real actors and actresses. Include a scene or dialogue from the book in the layout of the poster. Remember you are trying to convince someone to see the movie based on the book, so your writing should be persuasive. (Carter and Rashkis)
3. **On Trial (Prosecution)** - You are a prosecuting attorney putting one of the characters from the book you read on trial for a crime or misdeed. Prepare your case on paper, giving all your arguments and supporting them with facts from the book. (Carter and Rashkis)
4. **Book Jacket** - Make a book jacket for the book you read. Include the title, author, and publishing company of the book on the cover. Be sure the illustration relates to an important aspect of the book. On the inside flap or on the back of your book jacket, write a paragraph telling about the book. Explain why this book makes interesting reading when writing this “blurb.” (Carter and Rashkis)
5. **“Wanted” Poster** - Make a “wanted” poster for a character in the book you read. Include the following: a) a drawing of the character (you may use a magazine cutout), b) a physical description of the character, c) the character's misdeeds, d) other information about the character that you think is important, e) the reward offered for the capture of the character. (Carter and Rashkis)
6. **Newspaper Front Page** - Write the copy for a newspaper front page that is devoted entirely to the book you read. The front page should look as much like a real newspaper page as possible. The articles on the front page should be based on events and characters in the book. (Carter and Rashkis)
7. **Collage** - On a piece of poster paper, make a collage that represents major characters and events in the book you read. Use pictures and words cut from magazines in your collage. Tape or glue a detailed written explanation of what the pictures and/or words mean on the back of the poster.
8. **Time Line** - Make a time line of the major events in the book you read. Be sure the divisions on the time line reflect the time periods in the plot. Use drawings or magazine cutouts to illustrate events along the time line. (Carter and Rashkis)
9. **Children's Story** - Retell the plot of the book you read as it might appear in a third-grade reading book. Be sure that the vocabulary you use is appropriate for that age group. Variation: Retell this story to a young child. Tape your story-telling. (Carter and Rashkis)
10. **Character's Poetry Choices** - From a collection of poetry, pick out poems you believe specific characters would like. Write an explanation as to why you think they suit the character and read a couple of them to the class. You might also want to pick out poetry that reflects something about the theme or setting.
11. **Advertising Posters** - If the novel lends itself to this, design a poster or posters advertising and promoting a specific event such as the Championship Coon Hunt in *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls.
12. **Movie Decisions** - Decide if the novel would make a good movie. Would it attract enough viewers to turn it into a movie? Is there enough action? How about the dialogue? Would there have to be a lot of changes? What parts might be taken out? Write a detailed explanation as to how you would script it. Discuss possible actors, camera angles, lighting, sound effects, special effects, etc.
13. **Area Map** - Make a map of the area the story takes place in. Include characters' houses and other locations mentioned in the story. (Mitchell)
14. **Research** - Do research on a topic that relates to the book and present your findings to the class. A handout for the class containing major points should be included.

15. **Pamphlet** - Write up a how-to pamphlet explaining the steps or ideas involved in doing something from the novel like how to hunt raccoons. (Mitchell)
16. **Diagrams** - Create a diagram or web actions, events, or character relationships in the novel. You might choose an event and show each character's relation to it or you might choose a character and show other characters' relationship to him or her. Write an explanation to accompany your diagram.
17. **ABC Schemes** - Select words or quotes from the novel that are important to the novel. Find at least one word or quote for each letter of the alphabet. Write the words/quotes in alphabetical order. For more of a challenge, keep the words/quotes in chronological order so the reading of them makes sense and gives the reader a good idea of the story.
18. **Wanted Posters** - Instead of the traditional wanted posters dealing with characters, make wanted posters showing what the main characters in your book wanted most in the world.
19. **Comics** - Go through comics (in newspapers or magazines) for several weeks looking for comic strips that specific characters would like. Mount them on paper and write an explanation of why this comic would appeal to the character.
20. **Word Collages** - Cut out thirty to forty words or phrases that describe the book in some way and would encourage others to read the book. Write the book title in the center of a blank sheet of paper and then glue the cut words around it. Hang it up to advertise the book. (Mitchell)
21. **Radio Announcements** - Record a radio announcement as an advertisement for the book. Write up the announcement ahead of time and practice varying your voice before you record it.
22. **Costumes** - Design costumes from the period of the book. Draw or sketch them and write a written explanation about the clothes.
23. **Book Reviews** - Broadcast a book review on the school public announcement system.
24. **Crossword Puzzle** - Create a crossword puzzle by hand (not using a computer program!). Include clues about the setting, characters, and plot. Be sure the final product is neat and can be photocopied for the rest of the class. Also include an answer key.
25. **Scroll** - Create a scroll to illustrate your book. Try to make it look authentic and include as many visuals as possible.
26. **Sales Talk** - Make a sales talk, pretending your audience is composed of bookstore clerks and you want them to push this book. Be sure to make notes and practice ahead of time.
27. **Poetry** - If the book you read was a collection of poems, create your own poem(s) in the style of the ones in the collection. Add illustrations to go along with the poem(s).
28. **Poster** - Make a poster about the book using at least four different textures to add dimension. Write about what each item symbolizes and glue it on the back.
29. **Folktales** - Mix the characters of several familiar folktales and write the story that results.
30. **Literary Cartoons** - Collect cartoons that use literary allusions found in books you have read. Write an explanation to go along with the cartoons.
31. **Book Time** - Pretend to be a book and tell what you hold within your pages. Advertise yourself effectively.
32. **Mobile** - Make a mobile from drawings of people or objects in the book. Include a written explanation of the significance of the various items.
33. **Cartoon Characters** - Draw cartoons of the characters.
34. **Your Story** - Write your own story using the same title and theme as the book.
35. **Tape Recording** - Tape part of the story for the class with appropriate musical background.
36. **Postcard** - Create a postcard that describes your book.
37. **Greeting Card** - Create a greeting card using the theme, characters, or setting of your book.
38. **Illustrations** - Illustrate a book written without illustrations.
39. **Poster Ad** - Create a poster that effectively advertises your book.
40. **Book Dedications** - List the main characters in the book you have read. Dedicate another book to each character and tell why each would benefit from the reading of the dedicated book.
41. **Object Illustration** - Give an oral summary of the story, using handmade objects or objects found at home to illustrate the story.
42. **Photography** - Photograph people, settings, events, etc., that illustrate your book.
43. **Travelogue** - Create a travelogue using pictures, postcards, magazine clips, etc., to illustrate a book that uses a variety of settings.
44. **Demonstration** - If you learned something tangible from reading your novel, demonstrate that knowledge to the class. Check with the teacher first to see if it is okay and to assist with gathering all the necessary materials.
45. **Peep Show** - Make a peepbox of an important scene or event.
46. **Experiment** - Do a scientific experiment associated with the book.

47. **Seed Mosaic** - Make a seed mosaic to illustrate a setting or event.
48. **Soap Carving** - Make a soap carving to illustrate the book.
49. **Scrapbook** - Prepare a scrapbook illustrating the book.
50. **Charades** - Develop a game of charades based on the characters in the book
51. **Cooking** - Prepare and serve a related food(s) from the book.
52. **Character Booklet** - Follow the directions given below.

Page 1: Include title of novel, author of novel, and name of character you've chosen.

Example:

Introducing
DALLAS,
A main character in
THE OUTSIDERS
by S.E. Hinton

Your name
Hour
Date

Page 2: A character poem based on the letters of the character's name.

Example:

Daring
And always in trouble with the
Law,
Loving only Johnny,
Aggressive and crude and violent—
Society's misfit.

Pages 3 to the end: Pages with illustrations of likes/dislikes, desires/fears, things and people important to the character NEATLY mounted. With each cutout or illustration, write a sentence or two explaining the importance of the pictured item. Your booklet will be more effective (and get a higher grade!) if the pages are arranged in a logical order and, together, tell a story (relay the novel's plot) as they reveal facts about the character.

Goal: 10 EFFECTIVE illustrated pages.

Note: Booklet must show an understanding of the novel, insight into characters, careful writing skills, and neat effort. A touch of color and creativity would be a plus!

Created by Mary DeMott, Sexton High School, Lansing, Michigan. (Mitchell)

53. **Psychiatrist's Report** - (Example given is based on Roderick Usher from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher")

Purpose: (1) To take you deeper into the character of Roderick Usher, (2) To encourage you to analyze his actions and words and make some generalizations about him, (3) To put you in a situation where you must draw support and evidence directly from the literature by using quotations and lines from the story.

Directions: First read "Case Notes on Patient Romeo Montague" so you can see how the report is to be written and how quotations and lines are used to support what is said. Now, assume that you are a psychiatrist and that you have been assigned a patient, Roderick Usher. You will meet with your patient three times and will try to determine this character's motives, dreams, feelings, and priorities. Then you will make a diagnosis about your patient's problems or conflicts and plan an appropriate treatment program. Use the form below to jot down notes about your patient, using descriptive lines and lines of dialogue as appropriate.

1. Case background - who referred the patient? What were the concerns of that person?
2. Description of character at first meeting (use information at the bottom of p. 140)
 - a. physical appearance
 - b. mental state
 - c. behavior pattern
3. Background of family (hypothesize as necessary)
 - a. mother
 - b. father
 - c. siblings
 - d. home environment
4. Background of character
 - a. educational
 - b. social
5. Description of character at second meeting (use information from 140 to second column of p. 144)
 - a. physical description
 - b. mental state
 - c. behavior pattern
6. Description of character at third meeting (use information from bottom of p. 144 to first column of p. 147)
 - a. physical description
 - b. mental state
 - c. behavior pattern
7. Diagnosis
8. Conclusion
 - a. treatment
 - b. termination
 1. cured
 2. death

This assignment originated from Mamie Hoskins' idea in IDEAS PLUS - Book 3. (Mitchell)



Individual “C” Projects

Holden Caulfield describes a good book as one that “when you’re done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it.” Imagine that the author of the book you read is a terrific friend of yours. Write out an imaginary telephone conversation between the two of you in which you discuss the book you read and other things as well. (Carter and Rashkis)

1. **Test** - Make a test for the book you read. Include ten true-false, ten multiple choice, and ten short answer essay questions. After writing the test, provide answers to your questions. (Carter and Rashkis)
2. **Hero/Heroine** - Select one character from the book you read who has the qualities of a heroine or hero. List these qualities and tell why you think they are heroic. (Carter and Rashkis)
3. **Casting** - Imagine that you are about to make a feature-length film of the novel you read. You have been instructed to select major characters in your novel from your English classmates and tell why you selected each person for a given part. Consider both appearances and personality. (Carter and Rashkis)
4. **Lessons Learned** - List five of the main characters from the book you read. Give three examples of what each character learned or did not learn in the book. (Carter and Rashkis)
5. **Job Application** - Obtain a job application from an employer in your area, and fill out the application as one of the characters in the book you read might do. Before you obtain the application, be sure that the job is one for which a character in your book is qualified. If a resume is required, write it. (A resume is a statement that summarizes the applicant’s education and job experience. Career goals, special interests, and unusual achievements are sometimes included.) (Carter and Rashkis)
6. **Letter to a Friend** - Write a letter to a friend about the book you read. Explain why you liked or did not like the book. (Carter and Rashkis)
7. **Telephone Conversation** - In *The Catcher in the Rye*,
8. **Words to Live By** - Make a list of at least ten proverbs or familiar sayings. Now decide which characters in the book you read should have followed the suggestions in the familiar sayings and why. Here are some proverbs to get you started: He who hesitates is lost. All’s fair in love and war. The early bird catches the worm. A stitch in time saves nine. (Carter and Rashkis)
9. **Change of Setting** - Change the setting of the book you read. Write an explanation as to how this change of setting would alter events and affect characters.
10. **Complete Ideas** - Complete each of these eight ideas with material growing out of the book you read: This book made me wish that, realize that, decide that, wonder about, see that, believe that, feel that, and hope that. (Carter and Rashkis)
11. **Lists of Rules** - Select a character who has very definite ideas on a topic such as *friendship*, *raising children*, or *getting along in school*. Then make up a set of “rules” about that topic as that character might state them.
12. **Change Actions** - Choose a character in the book and look specifically at how he or she handled a specific situation. Then write about how you would have like to have seen the matter handled.
13. **Similar Situations** - Write about a situation in the book that moved or angered you and share situations or feelings you have experienced which were similar.
14. **Good Advice** - Choose a character and write all the advice you have to give to this character.
15. **Study Dialect** - Go through different chapters of the novel, gathering phrases and words that are used differently than you would use them. List the words and phrases and explain what they mean and tell how you would express the same idea.
16. **Book Titles** - Many book titles are not appealing or don’t give an accurate idea of what the book is about. Create several new titles for your book and attach a written explanation of your choices.

17. **Rewrite Scenes** - Choose a scene that you feel didn't end up satisfactorily and rewrite it using the same tone and point of view as the author. Or create a scene you would like to have included in the book.
18. **Eulogy** - If an animal or character from your book dies, write a eulogy for him or her.
19. **Present Awards** - Create a list of awards for both negative and positive actions and decide which character in the novel will receive each award.
20. **Character Wills** - Write character wills. If a character died who would they leave things to? Include material things as well as their hopes and advice to other characters. (Mitchell)
21. **Lists** - Compose lists that have some relation to characters or issues in the book. For example, in *The Pigman* John and Lorraine could compose a list of everything that's wrong with adults or parent. In *The Crucible* you could make up lists of everything that makes a person a witch.
22. **Telegram** - Condense the essence of the book into fifteen, fifty, or one hundred words.
23. **Past to Present** - Bring a book character from past to present. Write how the character would act today. For example, how would he/she act at a football game? A pep rally? The prom?
24. **Poetry** - Write an original poem based on one of the characters in the book or write a report in poem form.
25. **Comparison** - Write a comparison between two books of similar theme or between two books written by the same author.
26. **Diary** - Write a few pages from a diary as if you were one of the characters.
27. **Summarization** - Get the plot down to one succinct paragraph.
28. **Poetry** - Create a poem to illustrate an important episode of the book or to summarize the book.
29. **Humorous Incident** - Write or tell about the most humorous incident in your novel from a different point of view than the one given in the story.
30. **Favorite Part** - Write or tell about your favorite part of the story and explain why it was your favorite.
31. **Facts** - If you read a nonfiction book, make a list of facts you learned.
32. **Role Playing** - Imagine you are one of the characters in the book. Write about what you think of the author for putting you into the book and what you think of the other characters.
33. **Unpopular Position** - Choose a character and defend why his or her role in a story should be different. Example: Rumpelstiltskin should have gotten the Queen's son to raise because he had magical powers.
34. **Book at Home** - Tell what your home would be like if it belonged to Pippi Longstocking, a "Borrower," or another well-known character.
35. **Special Words** - Think of five to ten special words to describe the book. Write why you chose these words.
36. **Biography** - Write a biography of one of the characters.
37. **Interview** - Write an interview between a character in the book and the author.
38. **Interview** - Write an interview between two characters in the book.
39. **Author Appreciation** - Write a letter of appreciation to an author you admire, asking questions and sharing thoughts.
40. **Biography Imagination** - After reading a biography, pretend you visited the person when he or she was your age. Tell or write about your visit.
41. **Sixty-Four Words** - A very impatient person has asked about the main character in your book. Describe him or her in sixty-four words.
42. **Book Improvement** - The author has written to you and wants to know how this book could be improved. Answer the author's letter.
43. **Principal** - Your principal has asked if you would recommend this book for him or her to read. Give specific reasons.
44. **President's Address** - The U.S. president has learned that you are reading this book and wants you to tell one thing that a main character discovered about life that you think all Americans should know. Tell why you chose this message.
45. **Minor Character** - Place yourself in the role of a minor character and describe the main character as you see him or her.
46. **Subject of Interest** - Make a case for how a certain book could be used successfully in another subject.
47. **Next-Door Neighbor** - Choose a character and write about why you would like or not like to have him or her as your neighbor.
48. **Friendship** - Choose a character and write about why you would or would not like to have him or her as your friend.
49. **Limerick** - Make up a limerick about the story.
50. **Haiku** - Write a haiku describing the story, a main point, or a character.
51. **Sentences** - Make a list of the ten most interesting or critical sentences in the book. Create a story of your own using these sentences just as they are written in your book.

52. **Book Cards** - Write a brief summary on a three-by-five card and develop a file box for classmates to use.
53. **Critical Reading** - Evaluate the quality of the book considering one of the following: characterization, plot, description, setting, dialogue, or theme.
54. **Movie Version** - Compare the movie or television version with the book.
55. **Library Recommendation** - Write a recommendation to the librarian for the purchase of a good book you have read.
56. **Lost or Found** - Make up a lost or found ad for an object or character.
57. **Book Critic** - Find a part in a realistic book that you feel could not have happened. Defend your choice.